AMAZONIAN TADPOLES' REACTION TO AQUATIC PREDATORS

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Abstract: To defend themselves, tadpoles form schools and are unpalatable to fish, but invertebrates are still able to predate them. Therefore, we devised an experiment to investigate whether the tadpoles have a change of behavioral patterns as a defense against different predators. Tadpoles were collected in the ponds and separated in two species, Rhinella sp. and Boana sp. The predators collected were a fish, identified as *Hoplias* sp., and an aquatic insect belonging to the Belostomatidae family. We put the predators in transparent plastic bags filled with clean water to test the visual sense of the tadpoles, and with holes in the bag to test for responses to chemical stimuli. The result showed no pattern of significance both for *Rhinella* sp. and for *Boana* sp. The hiding behavior was on average more present during the control treatment than in the predator treatments, but in all instances the difference was too small to be considered significant. Our result could mean that the tadpoles are unable to detect a predator through both visual and chemical stimuli. On the other hand, the result can be due to the predators' hiding abilitiesand stay motionless until a prey passes by. We also observed that the tadpoles only showed reactions due to mechanical disturbances. This could indicate that the lateral line might be the most important sensory organ during the Anuran larval stages.